

4487. e. 6.  
1 - 16



# Dr. Chauncy's Election SERMON.

May 27<sup>th</sup>. 1747.



Dr. George

George



*Samuel Maxwell*

Civil Magistrates must be just, ruling in the Fear  
of God.

A

# S E R M O N

Preached before His EXCELLENCE

*William Shirley, Esq;*

The Honourable

His Majesty's COUNCIL,

A N D

House of Representatives,

Of the Province of the

*Massachusetts-Bay in N. England;*

*May 27. 1747.*

Being the ANNIVERSARY for the ELECTION of  
His Majesty's Council for said Province.

---

By *Charles Chauncy, D. D.*

*One of the Pastors of the first Church in BOSTON.*

---

*Deut. xvi. 20. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow--.*

---

*N. B. The several Paragraphs which, for want of Time,  
were omitted in Preaching, are inserted in their proper  
Places, and, for Distinction's sake, comprehended in Crotches.*

---

B O S T O N:

Printed by Order of the Honourable House of  
REPRESENTATIVES. 1747.

in the House of Representatives,



In the House of Representatives,

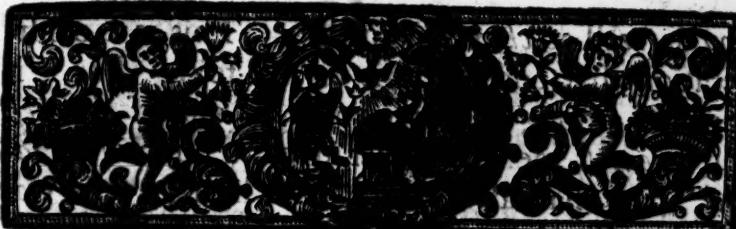
May 28. 1747.

Ordered,

THAT the Representatives of  
the Town of Boston be directed  
to give the Thanks of the House  
to the Rev. Dr. Chauncy, for his  
Sermon preach'd Yesterday before the  
General Court, being the Anniversary  
for the Election of Councillors, and to  
desire a Copy thereof for the Press.

T. Hutchinson, Sp<sup>kr.</sup>





A N

## *Election-SERMON.*

II SAM. xxiii. 3.

*The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel  
spake to me ; be that ruleth over Men  
must be just, ruling in the Fear of God.*

**F**or we may judge by the manner in which these words are introduced, there are none in all the bible, applicable to civil rulers, in their publick capacity, of more solemn importance.

**T**he last words of good men are commonly tho't worthy of particular notice ; especially, if they are great as well as good, of an elevated station

*tion as well as character in life.* This is a consideration that adds weight to my text. For it is enrolled among the *last* words of one of the *best* and *greatest* men that ever lived. Such was *David*, ‘the man after God’s own heart,’ who was raised up from low life to the regal dignity, and stiled, on that account, ‘the anointed of the God of Jacob.’

And was my text nothing more than his own private sentiments, formed with due care, upon long observation and experience, it might well deserve the particular attention of all in civil power; especially, as he was a man of extraordinary knowledge, penetration and wisdom, as well as piety; and, at the same time, singularly qualified to make a judgment in an affair of this nature, as he was called into publick service from a youth, and had for many years reigned king in *Israel*.

But it is not only *David* that here speaks. The words are rather God’s than His. For they are thus prefaced, *The God of Israel said, the rock of Israel spake to me.* ‘That God who had selected the Jews to be his people, and was their God so as he was not the God of other nations, the rock on whom their political state was built, and on whom it depended for support and protection’ :--- This God spake unto *David*, either by *Samuel*, or *Nathan*, or some other inspired prophet, or himself immediately from heaven, saying,

## An Election-SERMON.

9

ing, as in the words I have read to you, *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.* It is certainly some momentous truth, highly worthy of the most serious consideration of civil rulers, that is here delivered; or it would not have been ushered in with so much solemnity. *Some read the words, as agreeable enough to the original, as criticks observe, there shall be a ruler over men that shall be just, ruling in the fear of God;* and refer them to *Christ*, as agreeing with other prophecies, which describe him as a king that shall reign in righteousness, and be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: But if they be allowed to look forward to him that has since come forth out of Zion, they were also designed for the instruction and benefit of *Solomon*, *David's son and appointed successor to the throne of Israel.* And by analogy they are applicable to civil rulers, in their various stations, in all ages of the world.

In this view I shall now consider them, under the two following heads, obviously contained in them.

I. There is a certain order among mankind, according to which some are entrusted with power to rule over others.

II. Those who rule over others must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

The

The whole will then be applied to the occasions of the day. But of this will now nothing further anthonomous can be said. Now to I. I am to say, in the first place, there is a certain order among men, according to which some are entrusted with power to rule over others. This is evidently supposed in the text; and 'tis supposed, not as a bare fact, but a fact that has taken place conformably to the will of God, and the reason of things. This, to be sure, is the truth of the case, in itself considered. Order and rule in society, or, what means the same thing, civil government, is not a contrivance of arbitrary and tyrannical men, but a regular state of things, naturally resulting from the make of man, and his circumstances in the world. Had man abode in innocency, his nature as a *sociable* creature, and his condition as a *dependent* one, would probably have led to some sort of civil superiority: As, among the inhabitants of the upper world, there seems to be a difference of *order*, as well as species; which the scripture intimates, by speaking of them in the various stile of *thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, archangels* and *angels*. But however it would have been, had man continued in obedience to his maker, government is rendered a matter of necessity by the introduction of sin into the world. Was there no civil rule among men, but every one might do that which was right in his own eyes, without restraint from humane laws, there would not be

be safety any where on the earth. No man would be secure in the enjoyment, either of his liberty, or property, or life: But every man's hand would be against his fellow; and mankind must live in perpetual danger, from that oppression, rapine and violence, which would make this world rather a hell, than a fit place to dwell happily in.

The present circumstances of the human race are therefore such, by means of sin, that 'tis necessary they should, for their mutual defence and safety, combine together in distinct societies, lodging as much power in the hands of a few, as may be sufficient to restrain the irregularities of the rest, and keep them within the bounds of a just decorum. Such a superiority in some, and inferiority in others, is perfectly adjusted to the present state of mankind.—Their circumstances require it.—They could not live, either comfortably or safely without it.

And from hence, strictly and properly speaking, does that civil order there is among men take rise. Nor will it from hence follow, that government is a mere humane constitution. For as it originates in the reason of things, 'tis, at the same time, essentially founded on the will of God. For the voice of reason is the voice of God: And he as truly speaks to men by the reason of things, their mutual relations to and dependencies on each other, as if he uttered his voice from the ex-

cellent glory. And in this way, primarily, he declares his will respecting a civil subordination among men. The suitability of order and superiority, both to the nature of man, and his circumstances in the world, together with its necessary connection, in the nature of things, with his safety and happiness, is such an indication of the divine pleasure, that there should be government, as cannot be gainsay'd nor resisted.

Only it must be remembred here, a distinction ought always to be made between government in its *general notion*, and *particular form* and *manner of administration*. As to the latter, it cannot be affirmed, that this or that particular form of government is made necessary by the will of God and reason of things. The mode of civil rule may in consistency with the public good, admit of variety : And it has, in fact, been various in different nations : Nor has it always continued the same, in the same nation. And one model of government may be best for this Community, and another for that ; nay, that model which may be best for the same community at one time, may not be so at another. So that it seems left to the wisdom of particular communities to determine what form of government shall take place among them ; and, so long as the general ends of society are provided for and secured; the determination may be various, according to the various circumstances, policies, tempers and interests of different communities.

And

And the same may be said of the *manner* of vesting particular persons with civil power, whether *supreme* or *subordinate*. This is not so fix'd by the divine will, as that all nations are obliged to one and the same way of devolving the administration of rule. The supreme authority in Israel, 'tis true, from which, of course, all subordinate power in that state was derived, was settled by God himself on *David*, and entail'd on his family to descend in a lineal succession. But it does not appear, that this was ever intended to be a rule obligatory on all nations of the earth: Nor have they kept to it; but have varied in their manner of designing persons for, and introducing them into, the several places of civil trust. And this seems to be a matter alterable in its nature, and proper to be variously determined according to the different circumstances of particular nations.

But 'tis quite otherwise in respect of government itself, in its *general* notion. This is not a matter of meer humane prudence, but of moral necessity. It does not lie with men to determine at pleasure, whether it shall or shall not take place; but, considering their present weak, exposed and dependent condition, 'tis unalterably right and just there should be rule and superiority in some, and subjection and inferiority in others: And this therefore is invariably the will of God; his will manifested by the moral fitness and reason of things.

And the will of God, as discovered in the revelations of scripture, touching government among men, perfectly coincides with his will *primarily* made known, upon the same head, by the constitution of things : Or rather, 'tis more clearly and fully opened. For *kings*, and *princes*, and *nobles*, and *all the judges of the earth*, are here represented \* as *reigning and ruling by God* : Yea, they are stiled, the *ministers of God* † ; and the *powers that be* are declared to be *ordained of God* || : And, upon this consideration, *subjection to them* is demanded, for *conscience sake* ‡ ; and *whoever resisteth*, is looked upon as *resisting the ordinance of God* \*. From all which it is apparent, there is no more room to dispute the *divinity* of civil rule upon the foot of *revelation*, than of reason.

And thus we have seen, not only that some among men have rule over others, but that it is reasonable in itself, and agreeable to the will of God, it should be so.

And 'tis easy to collect from the whole, the true *design* of that power some are entrusted with over others. It is not merely that they might be distinguished from, and set above vulgar people ; much less that they might live in greater pomp, and be revered as gods on earth ; much less still that they might be in circumstances to oppress their fellow-creatures, and trample them

---

\* Prov. 8. 15, 16. † Rom. 13. 4. || Verse 1.

‡ Verse 5. \* Verse 2.

under their feet : But it is for the *general good* of mankind ; to keep confusion and disorder out of the world ; to guard men's lives ; to secure their rights ; to defend their properties and liberties ; to make their way to justice easy, and yet effectual, for their protection when innocent, and their relief when injuriously treated ; and, in a word, to maintain peace and good order, and, in general, to promote the public Welfare, in all instances, so far as they are able. But this leads me to the next head of discourse, which is what I have principally in view ; *viz.*,

II. Those who rule over others must be *just*, *ruling in the fear of God*. Here I shall distinctly say,

i. They must be *just*. They ought to be so in their *private capacity* ; maintaining a care to exhibit in their conduct, towards all they are concerned with, a fair transcript of that fundamental law of the religion of Jesus, as well as eternal rule of natural justice, ' all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' But *private justice*, tho' necessary in all, yet is not the virtue here especially intended. The injunction respects those who *rule over men* ; and 'tis as *magistrates*, not *private members* of society, that they are required to be *just*.

And this duty includes in it more than a negation of unrighteousness. 'Tis not enough that rulers are not unjust ; that they don't betray the

the trusts reposed in them ; that they don't defraud the public ; that they don't oppress the subject, whether in a barefac'd manner, or in a more covert way ; by downright violence, or under the cloak of law : 'Tis not enough, I say, that rulers don't, in these and such like ways, pervert judgment and justice ; but, besides all this, they must be *positively* righteous. Being possess'd of an inward, steady, uniform principle of justice, setting them, in a good measure, above the influence of private interest, or party views, they must do that which is equal and right, in their various stations, from the king in supreme, to the lowest in authority under him.

It would carry me too far beyond the hour assigned me, should I make a distribution of rulers into their several ranks, and mention the more special acts of justice respectively required of them. I shall therefore content my self with speaking of them chiefly in the collective sense ; pointing out, under a few general heads, some of the more important articles wherein they should approve themselves just. And they are such as these.

1. They must be just in the *use of their power* ; confining it within the limits prescribed in the constitution they are under. Whatever power any are vested with, 'tis delegated to them according to some civil constitution. And this, so long as it remains the constitution, they are bound in justice to conform themselves to : To be sure, they ought

ought not to act in violation of any of its main and essential rights. Especially, is this an important point of justice, where the constitution is branched into several parts, and the power originally lodged in it, is divided, in certain measures, to each part, in order to preserve a ballance in the whole. Rulers, in this case, in either branch of the government, are bounded by the constitution, and obliged to keep within the proper limits assigned them ; never clashing in the exercise of their power, never encroaching upon the rights of each other, in any shape, or under any pretence whatever. They have severally and equally a right to that power which is granted to them in the constitution, and to wrest it out of each other's hands, or to obstruct one another in the regular legal exercise of it, is evidently unjust. As in the *British constitution*, which devolves the power of the state, in certain proportions, on *King, Lords and Commons*, they have neither of them a right to invade the province of the other, but are required, by the rule of righteousness, to keep severally within their own boundaries, acting in union among themselves, and consistency with the constitution. If the prerogatives of the *King* are sacred, so also are the rights of *Lords and Commons* : And if it would be unjust in *Lords or Commons*, to touch, in any instance, the prerogative of the *crown* ; so would it be in the *crown*, to invade the rights, which are legally settled in *Lords and Commons* : In either of these cases, the law of righteousness is violated : Nor does the *manner* in which it is done

done make any essential difference ; for, if one part of the government is really kept from exerting it self, according to the true meaning of the constitution, whether it be done openly, or by secret craft ; by compulsion or corruption, the designed ballance is no longer preserved ; and which way soever the scale turns, whether on the side of *sovereignty*, or *popularity*, 'tis forced down by a false weight, which, by degrees, will overturn the government, at least, according to this particular model.

And the case is just the same in all *dependent* governments, as in those whose power originates in themselves : Especially, where the derived constitution, like that of *Great-Britain*, is divided into several ruling parts, and distributes the granted powers and priviledges severally among these ruling parts, to each their limited portion. The constitution is here evidently the *grand rule* to all cloathed with power, or claiming privilege, in either branch of the government. And 'tis indeed a *fundamental point* of justice, that they keep respectively within the bounds marked out to them in the constitution. Rulers in one branch of the state should not assume the power delegated to those in another : Nay, so far should they be from this, that they should not, in any degree, lessen their just weight in the government ; much less may they contrive, by an undue application to their hopes or fears, or by working on their ambition, or covetousness, or any other corrupt principle ;

principle ; much less, I say, may they contrive to influence them to give up their power, or, what is as bad, to use it unfaithfully, beside the intention for which it was committed to them. These are certainly methods of injustice ; and, if put in practice, will, by a natural causality, weaken, and, by degrees, destroy those checks which rulers are mutually designed to have one upon another ; the effect whereof must be *tyranny*, or *anarchy*, either of which will be of fatal consequence.

2. Another general instance wherein rulers should be just, relates to the *laws by which they govern*. [ They have an undoubted right to make and execute laws, for the publick good. This is essentially included in the very idea of government : Insomuch, that government, without a right to enact and enforce proper laws, is nothing more than an empty name.

And this right, in whomsoever it is vested, must be exercised under the direction of *justice*. For as there cannot be government without a right of legislation, so neither can there be this right but in conjunction with righteousness. 'Tis the *just* exercise of power that distinguishes *right* from *might* ; *authority* that is to be revered and obeyed, from *violence* and *tyranny*, which are to be dreaded and deprecated.

Those therefore to whom it belongs to make, or execute the laws of a government ought, in these exercises of their power, to square their conduct by that strict justice, which will be to them a sure rule of right action.]

To be sure, if they would be just, they must make no laws but what bear this character. They should not, when upon the business of framing and passing acts, suffer themselves to be swayed by any wrong bias, either from self-will, or self-interest; the smiles or frowns of men greater than themselves; or the humour of the populace: But should bring the proposed laws to a fair and impartial examination, not only in their reference to the temper, genius and circumstances of the community, but to that justice also which is founded in the nature of things, and the will of the supreme legislator: And if they should appear to be inconsistent with this eternal rule of equity, they ought not to countenance them, but should do what they can to prevent their establishment. And the rather, because should they enact that into a statute, which is unrighteous; especially, if it be plainly and grossly so, they would be chargeable with 'framing mischief by a law': The guilt whereof would be the more aggravated, as power, in this case, would be on the side of oppression; and, what is as bad, as unrighteousness, by this means, would take a dreadful spread thro' the community. For as the laws are the rule for the executive powers in the government, if these are

are unjust, all that is done consequent upon a regard to them, must be unjust too. That would be the state of things which *Solomon* describes, when he says, ‘ I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there ; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there : ’ Than which, there cannot be given a more terrible representation of the unhappy effect of a disregard to justice in the making of laws.

But Rulers, in order to their answering the character of just, must not satisfy themselves with making none but righteous laws ; but must provide also, so far as may be, a *sufficiency of such* to restrain the sons of wickedness, men of avaricious minds, and no consciences, from that rapine and violence, those frauds and oppressions, in their various kinds and degrees, which their lusts would prompt them to perpetrate, to the damage of society, and in violation of all that is right and just.

Besides which, they should be particular in their care to guard the important and extensive article of *commerce* ; calculating laws so as that they may have a tendency to oblige every member of the community, to use the methods of fairness and honesty in their dealings with one another : In order whereto, one of the main things necessary is, to fix the precise *weight* and *measure*, according to which these and those commodities shall be bought and sold ; hereby rendering the practice of honesty easy and familiar, while, at

the same time, it is made a matter of difficulty, as well as hazard, for this member of the community to defraud that, by palming on him a less quantity than he bargain'd, for, and expected to receive.

[ A noble example of this expedient to promote justice, the scripture presents us with, in the history it gives of the laws by which the *Jews* of old were governed. It was not thought sufficient to prohibit their ‘ doing unrighteousness in meteyard, or weight, or measure ; ’ and to command their having ‘ just ballances and just weights, a just Ephah and a just Hin : ’ But the *standard* was fixt by law, according to which all weights and measures must be regulated ; and it was kept in the *sanctuary of God*. And so exact was the government in its care to prevent all fraud, that it allowed no “ weights, ballances or measures to be made of any metal, as of *Iron*, *Lead*, *Tin*, (which were obnoxious to rust, or might be bent or easily impaired) but of *Marble*, *Stone* or *Glass*, which were less liable to be abused.” \* And officers also “ were appointed in every city to go about into shops, and see that the ballances and measures were just, and determine the stated measure of them : And with whomsoever they found any weight or measure too light or short, or balance that went awry, they were to be punished by the judges.” || This pattern of justice has

---

\* Vid. Bp. *Patrick* on *Levit.* 19. 36. || So speaks *Maimonides*, as quoted by *Ainsworth* on the above text.  
been

been copied after by all governments acquainted with it; and the more particular their laws have been for the regulation of *weights* and *measures*, the better calculated have they been to promote honesty in private dealing.]

And if justice in rulers should shew itself by reducing the things that are bought and sold to *weight* and *measure*, much more ought it to be seen in ascertaining the *medium of trade*, as nearly as may be, to some determinate value. For this, whether it be money, or something substituted to pass in lieu of it, is *that* for which all things are exchanged in commerce. And if this, which is of such universal use in the affair of traffick, be a thing variable and uncertain, of one value this week, and another the next, 'tis difficult to conceive, how justice should take place between man and man, in their dealings with one another. If the measure we call a foot might gradually, in the space of a few months or years, lengthen into a yard, or shorten into an inch ; every one sees, it would, if used as a measure in trade, tend to spread unrighteousness in a community, rather than justice.. So, if the weight we call a pound might gradually, in the like space, increase or diminish one half ; 'tis past dispute, it would be an oceafion of general iniquity, rather than a means to promote honesty. And the case is really the same ( however insensible we may be of it ) with respect to the *passing medium* in a government. If what we call a *shilling*,

*Shilling*, may, in a gradual way, in the course of a few months or years, rise in *value* so as to be equal to two or three, or sink in proportion ; 'tis impossible, in the nature of things, but a wide door should be opened for oppression and injustice. An upright man, in this case, would find it extreamly difficult to do himself justice, or others he might be concerned with in busines. And for thoſe of dishonest minds, and no principles of honour or religion, if men of craft and foresight, they would have it very much in their power to enrich themselves by being unjust to their neighbour.

I am ſensible, the caſe may be ſo circumſtanced in a government, especially if it be a dependent one, as that it may be extreamly difficult, if not imposſible, while they have no money, to keep that which paſſes, in the room of it, from varying in it's *real* worth. But it is not very difficult ; to be ſure, it is not imposſible, to pitch upon ſome *certain standard*, to which the *current medium* may be ſo related, as that it's true value, at diſferent times, may be nearly ascertained : And if this was eſtabliſhed as the rule in all *public payments*, as well as *private contracts* and *bargains*, it would be no other than what is right. It would certainly tend, not only to do every one justice, but to put it very much out of the power of men of no probity 'to go beyond and defraud their brother : ' Whereas, while the *medium* is connected with no eſtabliſhed certain standard,

but

but continually varies in it's *real* worth, it must be, in the natural course of things, an occasion of great injustice. [Some, on the one hand, under the fair pretence of a reasonable care to secure themselves, will injure those who lie at their mercy, by extorting from them more than is meet. And others, on the other hand, will take the advantage, to pay a just debt with one half the true value it was originally contracted for : Nor will the practice of unrighteousness be confined to these and such like instances, but unavoidably mingle itself with men's transactions in the whole business of trade, so as to put them upon making a prey of one another ; as is too much the case among ourselves at this day.]

There is yet another thing, belonging to this head, wherein rulers should approve themselves just ; and that is, the *execution of the Laws.* [The power of *executing* as well as making laws (as has been hinted) is inseparable from government. And the demands of justice are to be comply'd with, in the one as well as the other. If 'tis just that rulers should make righteous laws, 'tis equally so, when they are made, that they should take effectual care to enforce a proper regard to them. Of what service would laws be, though ever so wisely calculated to promote the public good, if offenders against them should be connived at, or suffered, by one means or another, to go unpunished ? And what might reasonably be expected in consequence of such a breach of trust,

trust, but that the best laws, together with the authority that enacted them, should be held in contempt?—There is no such thing as supporting the honour of government, or securing the good ends proposed by the laws it establishes, but by unsheathing the sword, in a faithful and impartial execution of justice.

But here, that we may speak clearly, it may be proper to distinguish between *those rulers* to whom it belongs to *appoint* and *authorise persons to execute the laws*, and those who are *vested with authority for this purpose*. For the duty which justice requires is different, according to the nature of that power, wherewith these different rulers are betrusted.

It is certainly a point of justice, in *those* whose business it is to *empower others to execute the laws*, to select out of the community such as are well qualified for so important a trust. Every man is not fit to have the sword of justice put into his hands. And the main thing to be lookt at, in the choice of persons for this service, is their *suitableness* to it. *Meerly* their being men of birth and fortune, is not a sufficient recommendation: Nor, if they are eagerly forward in seeking for a post of honour or profit, is it a certain indication, that they are fit to be put into it: Neither, if they should offer money to purchase it, ought they, on this account, to be preferred to men of greater merit: Much less ought it to be looked upon

upon as a turning argument in their favour, that they are fit instruments to serve the secret designs of those in superior station. These are considerations beside the true merit of the case: And those only ought to bear sway, which enter into the real characters of men, determining their qualifications for the trust that is to be reposed in them.

The advice which *Jethro* gave *Moses* is here proper, ‘Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.’ \* These are the men, men of understanding, courage and resolution; men of integrity, fidelity and honesty; men of piety and substantial religion; men of a noble generosity, setting them above the temptations, which those of narrow minds and selfish views, are easily drawn away by and enticed: These, I say, are the proper men to fill the various posts in the state. And it would be injustice to the public, for the persons concerned in the disposal of them, to neglect these, and bestow them on those of a contrary character. Men of low natural capacities, and small acquired accomplishments, are unmeet to be exalted to places of important trust. And should this be done, it would be acting over the *evil*, which *Solomon* complained of in his day, *Folly is set in great dignity*. And those are as unfit to be

---

\* Exod. 18. 21.

constituted guardians of the laws, who are indolent, inactive and irresolute ; much more, if, together herewith, they are known to be of a vicious turn of mind. It can't be supposed, men of this character should be faithful in the execution of justice ; and to devolve this care on them, would be to wrong the community, and expose authority.

Not that those, with whom it lies to appoint officers, are always to blame, when unqualified persons are put into places of trust ; for they are liable, after all prudent caution, to be mistaken in their own judgment, and to be imposed on by misinformation from others. But then, they should take due care, when such persons are found, upon trial, to be unequal to the trust committed to them, to remedy the inconvenience : Nor otherwise will they continue *innocent*, however faultless they might be at first. 'Tis evidently the demand of justice, that such unmeet persons should be displaced, and others better qualified put in their room.

And 'tis equally just, that those who are capable of behaving well, but behave ill in their respective stations, should be testified against. And should they be so unadvised, as grossly to abuse their power ; applying it to the purposes of tyranny and oppression, rather than to serve the good ends of government, it ought to be taken out of their hands, that they might no longer be under

under advantages to injure their brethren of the same community.

These are the demands of justice from those, who are to put others into the executive trust.

And justice is likewise required of *this sort of rulers*, according to the respective trust that is committed to them.

If 'tis their business to sit in the place of judgment, they must judge uprightly in all cases, whether civil or criminal, and not under a wrong influence from favour to the rich, or pity to the poor, or fear of the great, or affection or disaffection to any man's person whatsoever ; having that precept in the divine law ever in their eye, ' Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment : Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty : But in righteousness shalt thou judge thy brother.' † And that also, ' Thou shalt not wrest judgment, thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift ; for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.' \*

If 'tis their business to enquire who have been offenders against the laws, and to exhibit complaints against them as such ; they must be coura-

---

† Levit. 19. 15. \* Deut. 19. 16.

gious and impartial, complying with their duty equally in respect of all, be their character what it will.

If 'tis their business to act as executioners of justice, they must faithfully inflict the adjudged sentence : In doing of which, tho' there may be room for the exercise of compassion, especially in the case of some sort of debtors ; yet the righteousness of the law may not be eluded by needless, much less fraudulent delays, to the injury of the creditor.

In fine, whatever their trust is, whether of less or greater importance, they must exercise it with care, fidelity, resolution, steadiness, diligence, and an entire freedom from a corrupt respect to men's persons, as those who are concerned for the honour of government, and that it's laws may take effect for the general good of the community.]

To go on,

3. Another instance wherein rulers should be just, respects the *debts* that may be due from the *public*. A government may be in debt, as well as private men. Their circumstances may be such, as to render it adviseable for them to borrow money, either of other governments, or within themselves : Or, they may have occasion to make purchases, or to enter into contracts, upon special emergencies, which may bring them in debt. In which cases, the rule of justice is the same

same to *magistrates*, as to men in a private life. They must pay that which they owe, according to the true meaning of their engagements, without fraud or delay.

[They may also be in debt for services done by labourers, in this and the other secular employment. And here the rule of justice is that, ‘ withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee’. || Or if the labourers are such as have nothing beforehand, but their day-labour is what they depend on for the support of themselves and families, the rule is yet more particular, ‘ Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy ; — at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it ; for he is poor, and setteth his heart on it : Lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee’. + And again, ‘ Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, nor rob him : The wages of him that is hired, shall not abide with thee all night until the morning’. ‡ ]

In fine, they may be in debt to their *own officers*, whether in higher or lower station, the proper business of whose office calls off their attention from other affairs. And as their time, and

---

|| Prov. 3. 27, 28. + Deut. 24. 14, 15. ‡ Lev. 17. 13.  
care,

care, and tho't, are employed in the service of the *public*, a *public maintenance* is their just due. ‘Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charge? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or, who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also?’ \* For it is written, ‘For this cause pay you tribute; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. † Render unto *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar’s* ‡.

Nor is it sufficient that they be supported according to the condition of men in low life. This may be tho’t enough, if not too much, by those who imagine, that the more strait-handed they are upon the head of allowances, the more serviceable they shall be to the public. But there is such a Thing in the state, as a ‘withholding more than is meet’. And it really tends to the damage of a government. Too scant an allowance may unhappily prove a temptation to officers, to be hard upon those dependent on them; and what they may injuriously squeeze out of them, by one artful contrivance or another, may turn out more to the hurt of the community, than if twice that sum had been paid out of the public treasury, and this evil, by means hereof, had been prevented. Besides, ’tis no ways fitting, that men cloathed with honour and power

---

\* 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. † Rom. 13. 6. ‡ Matth. 22. 21.  
should

should be brought down to a level with vulgar people, in the support that is granted them. Their outward circumstances should be elevated in proportion to their civil character, that they may be better able to support the visible dignity of their station, and command that respect which is due to men of their figure. He that is *Gouvernour* should eat the bread of a *Gouvernour*; and subordinate officers should be maintained, according to the rank they bear in the state: Nor ought their honourable maintenance to be tho't a matter of *meer bounty*; 'tis rather a *debt*, which can't be withheld without injustice.

[To be sure, where their stipends have been established, or, at least, they have had reasonable encouragement to expect such a certain acknowledgment for their service, righteousness requires that it be paid them: Nor may it be tho't that the *same nominal sum*, falling vastly below the *real worth* of the debt, will be sufficient to discharge it. It certainly is not sufficient, in the eye of *justice*, either *natural* or *revealed*; which respects no man's person, but will do that which is right to the lowest, as well as to the highest officer in the state.

And the case, in point of equity, is really the same, where a government has come into no special agreement; but the ascertaining the *quantum* proper for the support of it's officers, is left to it's own wisdom and probity. For an allowance

ance is due to them by the law of righteousness : And it ought to be granted, both in proper season, and full proportion, that there may be no reason for complaint, either of *penurious* or *unjust* dealing.

I may add here, the *distribution of rewards*, in case of extraordinary service done for a government, falls properly under this head of justice. For tho' there may be *bounty* in it, there is also a mixture of *righteousness*. But however this be, it has been the practice of all nations to shew singular marks of respect to those who have distinguished themselves by their eminent labours for the public. And it is to be hoped, this government will never be backward, according to their ability, suitably to reward those who have signalized themselves, in doing service for their king and country.]

4. Another general instance wherein rulers should be just, concerns the *liberties* and *privileges* of the *subject*. In all governments there is a reserve of certain rights in favour of the people : In some, they are few in kind, and small in degree : In others, they are both great and numerous ; rendering the people signally happy whose lot it is to be favoured with the undisturbed enjoyment of them. And it would be no wonder, if they should keep a jealous eye over them, and think no cost too much to be expended, for the defence and security of them : Especially, if they were

were the purchase of wise and pious ancestors, who submitted to difficulties, endured hardships, spent their estates, and ventured their lives, that they might transmit them as an inheritance to their posterity.

And shall such valuable, dear-bought rights be neglected, or invaded by the rulers of a people? 'Tis a principal part of that justice which is eternally expected of them, as they would not grossly pervert one of the main ends of their office, to preserve and perpetuate to every member of the community, so far as may be, the full enjoyment of their liberties and privileges, whether of a civil or religious nature.

Here I may say distinctly,

As rulers would be just, they must take all proper care to preserve entire the *civil* rights of a people. And the ways in which they should express this care are such as these.

They should do it by appearing in *defence* of their liberties, if called in question, and making use of all wise and suitable methods to prevent the loss of them: Nor can they be too active, diligent or laborious in their endeavours upon this head: Provided always, the privileges in danger are worth contending for, and such as the people have a just right and legal claim to. Otherwise, there may be hazard of losing *real* liberties, in the strife for those that are *imaginary*;

E

or

of valuable ones, for such as are of trifling consideration. They should also express this care, by seasonably and faithfully placing a proper guard against the designs of those, who would rule in a despotic manner, to the subversion of the rights naturally or legally vested in the people. And here 'tis a great mistake to suppose, there can be danger only from those in the highest station. There may, 'tis true, be danger from this quarter: And it has sometimes proved so in fact: An unhappy instance whereof was seen in the arbitrary reign of king JAMES the second, in person at home, and by his representative here; as a check to which, those entrusted with the guardianship of the nation's rights were spirited to take such measures, as issued in that revolution, and establishment of the succession, on which his present majesty's claim to the British throne is dependent. May the succession be continued in his royal house forever! And may the same spirit, which settled it there, prevail in the rulers of the English nation, so long as the sun and moon shall endure!

But, as I said, a people's liberties may be in danger from others, besides those in the highest rank of government. The men who strike in with the popular cry of liberty and privilege, working themselves, by an artful application to the fears and jealousies of the people, into their good opinion of them as lovers of their country,

if not the only stanch friends to it's interests, may all the while, be only aiming at power to carry every thing according to their own sovereign pleasure: And they are, in this case, most dangerous enemies to the community; and may, by degrees, if not narrowly watched, arrive to such an height, as to be able to serve their own ends, by touching even the people in their most valuable rights. And these commonly are the men, thro' whose influence, either as primary managers, or tools to others, they suffer most in their real liberties.

In fine, they should express this care in a constant readiness to bear due testimony against even the smaller encroachments upon the liberty of the subject, whether by private men's invading one another's rights, or by the tyranny of inferiour officers, who may treat those under their power, as tho' they had no natural rights, not to say a just claim to the invaluable priviledges of Englishmen.

The ancient Romans have set an illustrious example in this kind. Such was the provision they made to secure the people's priviledges, that it was dangerous for any man, tho' in office, to act towards the meanest freeman of Rome in violation of the meanest of them. Hence the magistrates who ordered Paul and Silas to be beaten uncondemned, feared when they heard they were ROMANS. And Lysias, the chief captain, was filled with the

like fear for commanding, that *Paul* should be examined with scourging; when he understood, that he was born a freeman of Rome. And it would have a good tendency to secure to the people the enjoyment of their liberties, if these smaller instances of illegal power were carefully and severely chastised.

But justice in rulers should be seen likewise in their care of the *religious* rights and liberties of a people. Not that they are to exert their authority in settling *articles of faith*, or imposing *modes of worship*, so as that all must frame their belief, and order their *practice*, according to their decisions, or lie exposed to *penalties* of one kind or another. This would be to put men under restraint, as to the exercise of their religious rights: Nor are *penal laws* at all adjusted in their nature, to enlighten men's minds, or convince their judgment. This can be done only by *good reason*: And this therefore is the only proper way of applying to reasonable creatures.

Justice in rulers should therefore put them upon leaving every member of the community, without respect of persons, freely to choose his own religion, and profess and practice it according to that *external form*, which he apprehends will be most acceptable to his maker: Provided, his religion is such as may consist with the public safety: Otherwise, it would be neither wisdom nor justice in the government to *tolerate* it.

Nor

Nor is this all ; but they should guard every man from all insult and abuse on account of his religious sentiments, and from all molestation and disturbance, while he endeavours the propagation of them, so far as he keeps within the bounds of decency, and approves himself a peaceable member of society.

Besides which, it would be no more than reasonable, if, as *christian* magistrates, they distinguished those in their regards, who professed the religion of JESUS, and in *that way*, which, to them, was most agreeable to *scripture rule*. They should be guardians to such *christian* societies, by defending their constitution ; by countenancing their manner of worship ; by maintaining the liberties granted to them in the *gospel-charter*, in all their regular exercises, whether in church assemblies for the performance of the services of piety, or the choice of officers, or the administration of discipline ; or in councils, greater or less, for the help and preservation of each other : And, in fine, by owning those who minister to them in sacred things, and providing for their support, according to that rule in *scripture*, as well as *common equity*, ‘They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel’ : Or if they ~~they~~ are generally and wrongfully kept out of a great part of that support, which has been engaged, and is justly due to them, by taking their case into consideration, and doing what may be effectual for their relief.

This

This last instance of the care of rulers, I will rather mention, because it falls in so exactly with the circumstances of the pastors of the churches in this *province*. There is not, I believe, an order of men, in the land, more universally, or to a greater degree, injured and oppressed in regard of their just dues. While others have it, in some measure, in their power to right themselves, by rising in their demands, in proportion to the sinking of the current medium, they are confined to a *nominal quantum*, which every day varies in its real worth, and has been gradually doing so, 'till it is come to that pass, that many of them don't receive more than one *half*, or *two thirds* of the *original value* they contracted for. And upon this it is owing, that they are diverted from their studies, discouraged in their work, and too frequently treated with contempt. And what is an aggravation of their difficulty, their only desiring that justice may be done them, often makes an uneasiness among their people: And if they urge it; to be sure, if they demand it, 'tis great odds but there ensues therupon contention and strife, and, at last, such a general alienation of affection, as puts an entire end to their usefulness.

Suffer me, my *fathers* in the government, as I have this opportunity of speaking in your presence, to beseech the exercise of your authority, on the behalf, (may I not say), of so valuable and useful a part of the community: And the rather, because some *special provision* for their relief seems to

to be a matter of justice, and not meer favour; as it is by means of the public bills, tho' contrary to the design of the government, that they are injured. And might not *this* be made, without any great expence either of time or pains, and so as to be effectual too, to put it out of the power of people to turn off their ministers with any thing short of the true value of what they agreed with them for, when they settled among them? This is all they desire: And as it is nothing more than common equity, would it not be hard, if they should be still left to groan under their oppressions, and to have no helper?

The great and general court, it must be acknowledged, more than twenty years since, "Upon serious consideration of the great distresses, that many of the ministers within this province laboured under, with respect to their support, resolved, that it was the indispensable duty of the several towns and parishes, to make additions to the maintenance of their respective ministers; and therein to have regard to the growing difference in the value of the bills of credit, from what they had sometimes been". And thereupon "earnestly recommended the speedy and cheerful practice of this duty to the several congregations within this province". And that the recommendation might be universally known and comply'd with, "Ordered, That their resolve should be publickly read on the next Lord's day after the receipt thereof, and at the anniversary

ry meeting of the several towns in the month of March next" following. ¶

¶ The resolve refer'd to above, and in part quoted, it's tho't proper to insert at large; and is in these words.

At a great and general court or assembly for his majesty's province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*, begun and held at *Boston*, upon Wednesday May 26. 1725. The following resolve pass'd both Houses, and was consented to by his honour the lieutenant Governour. *Viz.*

*Upon serious consideration of the great distresses that many of the ministers of the gospel within this province labour under, with respect to their support or maintenance, their salaries being generally paid in the public bills of credit of this province, altho' many of the ministers contracted with their people in the time when Silver money pass'd in payment; and the necessaries of life, such as cleathing, provisions, together with labour and other things, now demand so much more of the bills of credit than heretofore;*

*Resolved*, That it is the indispensable duty of the several towns precincts and parishes of this province, to make such additions to the salaries or maintenance of their respective ministers, as may honourably support and encourage them in their work; and therein to have regard as well to the time of the contract between the minister and people; and the specie therein mentioned, as to the great and growing difference in the value of the bills of credit, from what they have sometimes been. And this court do therefore most earnestly recommend the speedy and cheerful practice of this duty, to the several congregations and religious assemblies within this province: And that this resolve be publiclyk read on the next Lord's day after the receipt hereof, in the afternoon before the congregation be dismiss'd; and at the anniversary meeting of the several towns or precincts in the province in the month of March next.

By order of the great and general court or assembly, *Josiah Willard, Secr.*

And

## *An Election-SERMON.*

41

And it is with thankfulness that we take notice of this instance of the care of our *civil fathers*; tho' we are sorry, we must, at the same time, say, it was generally treated with neglect by our congregations, as being void of power.

It will not be pretended, but that the distresses of the ministers, and from the same cause too, the sinking of the medium, are vastly greater now, than they were twenty years ago: And if it was then reasonable, in the great and general Court, to recommend it to the several congregations, throughout the province, as their *indispensable duty*, to make additions to the maintenance of their ministers, and therein to have regard to the lower value of the bills of credit, from what they formerly were; it is certainly now high time to oblige them to this: Especially, as the grievances of the ministers have often, since that day, upon these occasions, been opened to their *civil fathers*, whose interposition has been humbly and earnestly intreated.—But I would not be too pressing: Neither have I said thus much on my own account, who am not, thro' the goodness of God, in suffering circumstances myself, but in very pity to many of my poor brethren who are; because there may be danger lest guilt should lie on the government, if they take no notice of the sighing of so considerable a body of men; and because, I verily believe, the offerings of the Lord are too often despised, by reason of that poverty those are .  
unrighteously

unrighteously reduced to, by whom they are presented.  
But to return,

5. Another instance of justice in rulers relates to the defence of the state, and it's preservation in peace and safety. [The happiness of a people lies very much in their living peaceably among themselves, and at quiet with their neighbours. For which reason, rulers are bound in justice to use all prudent endeavours, that they may fit every man under his own vine, and under his fig-tree, and have none to make them afraid'. In order whereunto, They should take care to prevent intestine jarrings and commotions in the government, by giving no occasion for murmurings and complaints, or if any should unhappily arise, by speedily removing the causes of them. By testifying a just displeasure against the fermentors of animosities, sedes and factions: By watching the motions of uneasy, turbulent and mebbish spirits, and checking the first out-breakings of them; or if, thro' the lusts of men, insurrection or rebellion should happen, by seasonably putting a stop thereto, lest afterwards the whole force of the government should be scarce sufficient for this purpose. It may be, the late unnatural rebellion, which began in Scotland, was too much despised at first.

It

It would not otherwise, 'tis probable, have risen to such a formidable height : Tho' the alwise holy God, by permitting this, and then remarkably succouring the King's arms, under the command of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, to put an end to this traitorous attempt against the throne of Great-Britain, took occasion, not only to lay the nation and it's dependencies, under more sensible bonds to give glory to him, in language like that of the 18th Psalm, ' Great deliverance hath he given to his king, and shewed mercy to his anointed : Therefore will we give thanks unto thee, O Lord, and sing praises to thy name ' : But to do that also, which was proper to engage their more fervent prayers of faith, that he would go on to clothe ~~the~~ the king's enemies with shame, and cause the crown to flourish on his head, and the head of his posterity forever.

Rulers also should endeavour to keep the state from being embroiled in *foreign* war, by contriving, in all prudent ways, to engage and continue the friendship of neighbouring nations ; by bearing with lesser injuries from them, and not hastily resenting greater ones, so far as may be consistent with the public safety ; by sacredly adhering to the treaties and contracts, they may have entered into with them ; by expressing a due caution not to invade their rights or properties, or in any instance whatever to give them just cause of provocation : Or if this shou'd at any time happen, or absit tuus quidam <sup>Ez 2</sup> mihi eloquor a te gratias <sup>pen.</sup> solam

pen, by appearing ready to make them all reasonable satisfaction.

Or if, after all, war should arise, by means of the pride, or avarice, or self-will and tyranny of unreasonable men, their concern should now be to look to the preservation of the state at home, by providing a sufficiency of warlike stores, in their various kinds ; by guarding the exposed frontiers and coasts ; and, in a word, by putting and keeping things in such a posture of defence, that neither their people, nor their interests, may easily fall a prey in their enemy's hands.

Besides which, it would be both wisdom and justice to carry the war into their enemies territories ; doing every thing in their power to humble their pride, curb their malice, and weaken their strength ; especially, where there may be most danger of being annoyed by them.

6thly, And finally, Rulers should be just to promote the *general welfare* and *prosperity* of a people, by discouraging, on the one hand, idleness, prodigality, prophanes, uncleaneſs, drunkenneſs, and the like immoraliſties, which tend, in the natural course of things, to their impoveriſhment and ruin : And by encouraging, on the other hand, industry, frugality, temperance, or chastity, and the like moral virtues, the general practice whereof are naturally connected with the flou-riſhing of a people in every thing that tends to make

make them great and happy. As also, by rendering the support of government as easy as is consistent with it's honour and safety; by calculating laws to set forward those manufactures which may be of public benefit; by freeing trade, as much as possible, from all unnecessary burdens; and, above all, by a wise and suitable provision for the instruction of children and youth: In order whereunto effectual care should be taken for the encouragement and support, not only of *private schools*, but of the *public means of education*. COLLEGES ought to be the special care of the government, as it is from hence, principally, that it has it's dependence for initiating the youth in those arts and sciences, which may furnish them, as they grow up in the world, to be blessings both in church and state. It would certainly be *unrighteous*, not to protect these societies in the full and quiet enjoyment of such rights as have been freely and generously granted to them: And if they should not have within themselves a sufficiency for the support of their officers, it would be a wrong to the community, not to do what was further wanting towards their comfortable and honourable support.

And having thus, in a general and imperfect manner, gone over the more important instances, wherein rulers should be just, it might now be proper to enlarge on the *obligations* they are under to be so: But the time will allow me only to suggest as follows.

[They

[T]hey are obliged to be thus just, from the fitness and reasonableness of the thing in itself considered. 'Tis a duty that naturally and necessarily results from the relation they stand in to society, and the power they are vested with, in all righteous ways, to promote it's welfare. And it would, in the nature of things, be incongruous and absurd for men so situated and trusted, and for such good ends, to injure those over whom they are exalted, by abusing their power to the purposes of tyranny and oppression. Such a conduct would evidently and grossly break in upon that propriety and fitness of action, which is immutably and eternally required, in such a ~~confliction~~<sup>condition</sup> of things, as rulers and ruled, and the relative obligations respectively arising therefrom.

They are also obliged to be thus just, in virtue of the will of the supreme legislator, made known in the *revelations of scripture*, which enjoining such precepts as those, 'Judges and officers shall thou make thee;—and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shall not wrest judgment;—that which is altogether just shall thou follow'. ‡ And again, *Thus saith the Lord*, Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: And do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow. ¶ To which laws of the great king of the world they

V. Deut. 16, 18, 19, 20. || Jer. 22. 3.

owe

two can indisputedly obey him, as they are, in communion with the rest of mankind, the subjects of his government. Nor can they be freed from the charge of reflecting contempt on the divine majesty, and that sovereign authority by which he governs his creatures, if, in their administrations, they should express a disregard to them. *on your  
insets etc of making flattery as blunt; yea  
old They card likewise obliged to be just, out of re-  
gard to the community, to which they are related; whose welfare is so dependent hereon, that if they act, in their respective stations, not from a principle of justice, but under the influence of worldly views and selfish designs, it may reasonably be ex-  
pected, that ‘ judgment should be turned away backward, and justice stand afar off’; that ‘ truth should fail in the street, and equity not be able to enter into the natural effect whereof must be the ruin of a people. Whereas, if they put on righteou-  
ness, and it clothes them; and their judg-  
ment is as a robe and a diadem: If they deliver the poor that cry, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him; and break the pieces the wicked, and pluck the spoil of his teeth’; they will approve themselves ‘ those righteous ones in authority, who cause the people to rejoice’: And the righteousness wherewith they rule them will be their *exaltation.* *with as glibly as you please a few quires  
new bounded even with old paper nothing  
old In fine, it should be a constraining argument  
with rulers to be just, that they are accountable  
to that JESUS, whom God hath ordained to be  
the**

the judge of the world, for the use of that power he has put into their hands. And if, by their unjust behaviour in their places, they have not only injured the people, but unhappily led them, by their example, into practices that are fraudulent and dishonest; I say, if they have thus misused their power, sad will be their account another day; such as must expose them to the resentments of their judge, which they will not be able to escape. It will not be any security to them, that they were once ranked among the great men of the earth. This may now be a protection to them, and it often indeed screens them from that human vengeance, which overtakes those of less influence, tho' guilty of less crimes. But the 'kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men', will in the day of the appearing of the son of God, be upon a level with the meanest of mankind, and as ready, if conscious to themselves that they have been unjust in their stations, to 'say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' A most affecting consideration, and should powerfully excite those who rule over others, to a righteous exercise of their power; especially, as they will by this means, if in other respects also they have behaved well, obtain the approbation of their judge; who will, as they have been 'faithful over a few things, set me over many more'. *make*

make them ruler over many'; placing them at his own right hand, in his kingdom.

II. I now proceed to say, in the second place, Those who rule over men, must *rule in the fear of God.*

The fear of God, being not only in itself a considerable part of religion, but also a grace that has a special influence on all the other parts of it, is commonly, and not unfitly, used in scripture to signify the whole of it. This seems to be the meaning of the phrase here: And the thing intended is, not only that rulers should be endowed with an inward principle of religion, but that they should exercise their authority, in their whole administration, under the influence of so good and powerful a disposition.

*He that ruleth over men, must rule in the fear of God.* As if the royal prophet had said, ' It is necessary, civil rulers should have upon their minds a becoming sense of God and religion: And it should govern their public conduct. Whatever they do, in their several stations, should be done under the guidance of an habitual awe of God, a serious regard to his governing will, and their accountableness to him. This is the principle that should have a predominating sway, in all exertments of themselves in their public capacity'. This I take to be the true sense of the words.

anno vñ has nom Gd:to dñe nominis Te  
Ippelerw

To be sure, 'tis the truth of the thing. Civil rulers ought to be possessed of a principle of religion, and to act under the direction of it in their respective stations. This is a matter of necessity. I don't mean that it is necessary in order to their having a right to rule over men. *Dominion is not founded in grace*: Nor is every pious good man fit to be entrusted with civil power. — 'Tis easy to distinguish between government in it's abstracted notion, and the faithful advantageous administration of it. And religion in rulers is necessary to the latter, tho' not to the former.

Not but that they may be considerably useful in their places, if the religious fear of God does not reign in their hearts. From a natural benevolence of temper, accompanied with an active honest turn of mind, they may be instrumental in doing good service to the public: Nay, they may be prompted, even from a view to themselves, their own honour and interest, to behave well in the posts they sustain, at least, in many instances. But if destitute of religion, they are possessed of no principle that will stimulate a care in them to act up to their character steadily and universally, and so as fully to answer the ends of their institution.

'Tis a principle of religion, and this only, that can set them free from the unhappy influence of those passions and lusts, which they are subject to, in common with other men, and by means whereof

whereof they may be betrayed into that tyranny and oppression, that violence and injustice, which will destroy the peace and good order of society. These, 'tis true, may be under some tolerable check from other principles, at least, for a while, and in respect of those actings that are plainly enormous. But no restraints are like those, which the true fear of God lays upon men's lusts. This habitually prevailing in the hearts of rulers, will happily prevent the out-breaking of their pride, and envy, and avarice, and self-love, and other lusts, to the damage of society ; and not only so, but it will weaken, and gradually destroy, the very inward propensities themselves to the various acts of vice. It naturally, and powerfully, tends to this : And this is the effect it will produce, in a less or greater degree, according to the strength of the religious principle, in those who are the subjects of it.

And a principle of religion also, and this only, will be effectual to excite rulers to a uniform, constant and universal regard to truth and justice, in their public conduct. Inferior principles may influence them in particular cases, and at certain seasons : But the fear of God only will prompt them to *every instance* of right action, and *at all times*. This will possess them of such sentiments, give such a direction to their views, and fix such a happy bias on their minds, as that their chief concern and care will be, to behave in their offices so as to answer the good ends for

which they were put into them. In one word, They will now be the subjects of that *divine* and *universal* principle of good conduct, which may, under God, be depended on, to carry them thro' the whole of their duty, upon all occasions, under all difficulties, and in opposition to all temptations, to the rendering the people, over whom they bear rule, as happy as 'tis in their power to make them.

To be sure, without a principle of religion, none of their services for the public will meet with the divine approbation. 'Tis therefore, in respect of *themselves*, a matter of absolute necessity that they be possess'd of the true fear of God. It won't suffice, should they behave well in their places, if they have no higher view herein than their own private interest; if they are influenced, not from a due regard to God, his honour and authority, but from love to themselves. This will spoil their best services, in point of the divine acceptance: Whereas, if they act from a principle of religion, what they do in a way of serving their generation will be kindly taken at the hands of a merciful God, and he will, thro' Jesus Christ, amply reward them for it, in the great day of retribution.]

#### **APPLICATI<sup>O</sup>N.**

It now remains to *apply* what has been said to *rulers* and *people*.

\* And

And 'tis fit I should first turn the discourse into an address to your *Excellency*, as it has pleased God and the King to advance you to the first seat of government, among those who bear rule in this province.

The administration, *Sir*, is devolved on you in the darkest day, it may be, *New-England* ever saw; when there was never more occasion for distinguishing talents in a *Governour*, to direct the public counsels, and minister to the relief and comfort of a poor people, groaning under the calamities of war and debt, and, what is worse than both, an unhappy *medium*, that fills the land with oppression and distress. We would hope, it was because the Lord loved this people, that he has set you over us; and that he intends to honour you as the instrument in delivering us from the perplexing difficulties wherewith our affairs are embarrass'd.

We have had experience of your *Excellency's* superiour wisdom, knowledge, steadiness, resolution, and unwearied application in serving the province: And would herefrom encourage our selves to depend on you for every thing, that may reasonably be expected of a *chief ruler*, furnished with capacities fitted to promote the public happiness.

We rejoice to see so many posts in the government, at the disposal of your *Excellency*, either alone,

alone, or in conjunction with your council, filled with men of capacity, justice and religion : And as the public good is so much dependent on the nomination and appointment of well qualified persons to sustain the various offices in the province, we promise our selves your eye will be upon the faithful of the land, and that, while you condemn every vile person, you will honour them that fear the Lord. And should any attempt by indirect means to obtain places of trust which others better deserve, we assure ourselves your *Excellency* will resent such an affront, and testify a just displeasure against the persons who shall dare to offer it.

The opinion we have of your *Excellency's* integrity and justice, forbids the least suspicion of a design in you to invade the *civil charter-rights* of this people. And tho' you differ in your sentiments from us, as to the *model* of our *church-state*, and the *external manner* of our *worship*; yet we can securely rely on the generosity of your principles to protect us in the full enjoyment of those *ecclesiastical rights* we have been so long in possession of: And the rather, because your *Excellency* knows, that our *progenitors* enterprized the settlement of this country *principally* on a *religious account*; leaving their native land, and transporting themselves and their families, at a vast expence, and at the peril of their lives, into this distant, and then desolate wilderness, that they might themselves freely enjoy, and transmit to us their posterity,

rity, *that manner of worship and discipline*, which we look upon, as they did, most agreeable to the purity of God's word.

Your Excellency knows too well the worth of learning, and the advantage of a liberal education, not to be strongly dispos'd to cherish the College, which has, from the days of our fathers, been so much the glory of New-England: And we doubt not, you will be always tender of its rights, and exert your self, as there may be occasion, for its defence and welfare.

And as your Excellency is our common father, we repair to you as the friend and patron of all that is dear and valuable to us; depending that you will employ your time, your thought, your authority, your influence and best endeavours, to ease our burdens, to lead us out of the labyrinths we have run into, and to make us a happy and prosperous people.

We can wish nothing better for your Excellency than the divine presence enabling you to act, in your whole administration, under the influence of a steady principle of justice, and an habitual awe and reverence of that God, for whom ultimately you derived your authority, and to whom you are accountable for the use of it. This will recommend you to the love, and entitle you to the praise of an obliged happy people; this will yield you undisturbed ease of mind under the cares and burdens,

burdens of government ; this will brighten to you the shades of death, embalm your memory after you are dead, and, what is infinitely more desirable, give you boldness when great and small shall stand before the Son of man, and procure for you that blessed *euge*, from the mouth of your divine Saviour and Master, ‘ Well done, good and faithful servant : Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’

Permit me, in the next place, with a becoming respect, to apply myself to the honourable his *Majesty's Council*, and the honourable *house of Representatives* ; whose desire has ordered me into this desk.

Through the goodness of God, we see the return of this *anniversary* for the exercise of one of those *charter-rights*, granted to our fathers, and continued to us, on the wise and faithful management whereof, the public happiness is very much dependent.

His *Majesty's council*, this afternoon to be elected, is an happy medium between the king and the people, and wisely designed to preserve a due ballance between the prerogatives of the one, and the privileges of the other. And as they constitute one branch of the *legislature*, they have a share in framing and passing all acts and orders. To them it appertains to assist the *chief ruler* with their advice upon all emergent occasions, especially in

in the court's recess. And without their consent, none of the *civil* posts in the government can be filled ; in consequence whereof, no judges can be appointed, no courts erected, no causes tried, no sentences executed, but by persons who have had their approbation : All which, by shewing the weight of this order of men in the state, bespeaks the importance of this day's business, and, at the same time, demands a proportionable care and faithfulness in the discharge of it.

It is not, *Gentlemen*, a trifling concern you have before you ; an affair wherein you may act with carelessness or inattention ; with a party or partial spirit ; out of affection to friends, or complaisance to superiors ; much less upon the corrupt design of making instruments to be employed and managed to serve your own private schemes. It is not for yourselves only that you are empowered and called to vote in the elections of this day, but for your God, your King and your Country : And you will be unjust to them all, if you give your voice as moved by any considerations, but those which are taken from the real characters of men, qualifying them to sit at the *Council-Board*.

You all know, from the oracles of God, how men must be furnished, in order to their being fit to be chosen into places of such important trust ; that they must be *wise and understanding*, and *known* to be so *among their tribes* ; that they must be *able men, and men of truth, men that fear*

fear God, and hate covetousness. And 'tis to be hoped, we have a sufficiency of such, in the land, to constitute his *Majesty's Council*. It would be lamentable indeed, if we had not. 'Tis your busines, *Gentlemen*, to seek them out. And with you will the fault principally lie, if we have not the best men in the country for *Councillors*; men of capacity and knowledge, who are well acquainted with the nature of government in general, and the constitution, laws, privileges and interests of this people in particular: Men of known piety towards God, and fidelity to their King and Country: Men of a generous spirit, who are above acting under the influence of narrow and selfish principles: Men of unquestionable integrity, inflexible justice, and undaunted resolution, who will dare not to give their consent to unrighteous acts, or mistaken nominations; who will disdain, on the one hand, meanly to withdraw, when speaking their minds with freedom and openess may expose them to those who set them up, and may have it in their power to pull them down, or, on the other, to accommodate their conduct, in a servile manner, to their sentiments and designs; in fine, who will steadily act up to their character, support the honour of their station, and approve themselves invariably faithful in their endeavours to advance the public weal.

These are the men, 'tis in your power, my honourable *Fathers*, to chose into the *Council*; and

and these are the men for whom, in the name of God, and this whole people, I would earnestly beg every vote this day : And suffer me to say, these are the men you will all send in your votes for, if you are yourselves men of integrity and justice, and exercise your *elective-power*, not as having concerted the matter beforehand, in some *party-juncto*, but under the influence of a becoming awe of that omnipresent righteous God, whose eye will be upon you, to observe how you vote, and for whom you vote, and to whom you must finally render an account, before the general assembly of angels and men, for this day's transaction.

We bow our knees to the alwise sovereign Being, who presides over the affairs of the children of men, in humble and fervent supplications, that he would govern your views, direct your tho'ts, and lead you into a choice that he shall own and succeed, to promote the best interests of this people.

And when the Elections of this day are over, and the several branches of the legislature shall proceed upon the affairs of the public, we promise ourselves you will act as those, who have upon their minds a just sense of the vast importance of the trust that is reposed in you.

To you is committed the defence of the *province*, the guardianship of it's liberties and privileges,

vileges, the protection of it's trade, and the care of it's most valuable interests: And never was there a time, wherein it's circumstances more urgently called upon you to exert yourselves, in seeking it's welfare.

Religion is not in such a flourishing state, at this day, but that it needs the countenance of your example, and the interposition of your authority, to keep it from insult and contempt. We thankfully acknowledge the pious care, the legislature has lately taken to restrain the horrid practice of cursing and swearing, which so generally prevailed, especially in this, and our other sea-port towns, to the dishonour of God, and our reproach as wearing the name of christians. And if laws still more severe are necessary, to guard the day and worship of God from profanation, we can leave it with your wisdom to enact such, as may tend to serve so good a design. And tho' we would be far from desiring, that our rulers should espouse a party in religion; yet we cannot but hope, they will never do any thing to encourage those, who may have arrived at such an height in spiritual pride, as to say, in their practice, to their brethren as good as themselves, ' stand by thy self, come not near me; for I am holier than thou': Concerning whom the blessed God declares, ' These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day'. And as for those, be their character, persuasion, or party, what it will, who, under the notion of appearing

ing zealous for God, his truths or ways, shall insult their betters, vilify their neighbours, and spirit people to strife and faction, we earnestly wish the civil arm may be stretched forth to chastise them : And if they suffer, 'twill be for disturbing the peace of society ; the evil whereof is rather aggravated than lessened, by pretences to advance the glory of God and the interest of religion.

We are thankful for the good and wholesome laws which have been made, from time to time, for the suppression of vice, in it's various kinds ; and, in particular, for the restraint that has been laid upon those, who may be inclined to excessive drinking. Alas ! that such multitudes, notwithstanding, are overtaken with this fault. Hard drinking is indeed become common all over the land. And 'tis astonishing to think what quantities of strong drink are consumed among us ! Unless some, well capable of forming a judgment, are very much mistaken, more a great deal is needlessly and viciously consumed than would suffice to answer the whole charge, both of church and state. A reproach this, to any people ! And if something further is not done by the government, to prevent the use that is made of strong drink, it will, in a little time, prove the destruction of the country, in the natural course of things ; if God should not positively testify his displeasure against such horrid intemperance. It may deserve your consideration, my *Fathers*, whether

whether one occasion of this scandalous consumption of strong drink, has not been the needless multiplication of *taverns*, as well as more *private licensed houses*, that are too commonly used for *tippling*, and serve to little purpose, but to tempt people, in low life, sinfully to waste their time, and spend their substance.

[It would also redound much to the advantage of the province, if our *civil Fathers* could contrive some way or other, that might be effectual to prevent people's laying out so much of the fruit of their labour, in that which is *needless* and *extravagant*. It will not be denied, by any capable of making observation, that the *excesses*, all ranks of persons have unhappily run into, need correction. 'Tis owing, in a great measure, to our *pride*, discovering it self in the *extravagance* of our *garb*, as well as *manner of living*, that we are brought low. And, if some *restraint* is not laid upon this vicious disposition, so generally prevalent in the land, we may complain of our difficulties, but 'tis not likely, without a miracle, they should be redressed.]

But there is nothing more needs your awaken'd attention, my honoured *Fathers* in the government, than the unhappy state of this people by means of the *current medium*. Whatever wise and good ends might be proposed at first, and from time to time, in the *emission of bills of credit*, they have proved, in the event, a cruel engine

gine of oppression. It may be, there was scarce ever a province under more melancholly circumstances, by reason of injustice, which is become almost unavoidable. Sad is the case of your men of *nominal salaries*: And much to be pitied also are those *widows* and *orphans*, who depend on the loan of their money for a subsistence : While yet, these last, of all persons in the community, should be most carefully guarded against every thing that looks like oppression. This sin, when *widows* and *fatherless children* are the persons wronged by it, is heinously aggravated in the sight of a righteous God ; as may easily be collected from that emphatical prohibition, so often repeated in all parts of the bible, ‘ Thou shalt not oppress the widow, nor the fatherless’. But the oppression reigning in the land, is not confined to this order or that condition of persons, but touches all without exception. None escape its pernicious influence, neither high nor low, rich nor poor. Like an over-bearing flood, it makes its way thro’ the province ; and all are sufferers by it, in a less or greater degree, and feel and own themselves to be so.

And will you, our honoured rulers, by any positive acts, or faulty neglects, suffer your selves to be instrumental in the continuance of such a state of things ? God forbid ! We don’t think you would *designedly* do any thing to countenance oppression, or neglect any thing that might have a tendency to remove it out of the land,

Neither

Neither can we think, that any former assemblies have knowingly acted, in the *emission of public bills*, upon dishonest principles : Tho' it may be feared, whether the righteous God, in holy displeasure at the sins both of *rulers* and *people*, may not have withheld counsel from our wise men, and scattered darkness in their paths : And if, in consequence hereof, there has been disunion in the sentiments of our *civil Fathers*, concerning the *public medium*, and unsteadiness in their conduct, 'tis no matter of wonder : Nor, upon this supposition, is it hard to be accounted for, that injustice, by means of the *paper currency*, should have taken such a general and dreadful spread, thro' the land.

But, by what means soever we became involved in these perplexities, 'tis certainly high time to make a pause, and consider what may be done that will be effectual towards the recovering and maintaining justice and honesty, that we may be called the *city of righteousness, the faithful city.*

It would be culpable vanity in me, to attempt to prescribe to our honourable legislature ; yet may I, without going beyond my line, after the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles, *reason with you of public righteousness*, and its connection with *a judgment to come.*

You are, my *Fathers*, accountable to that God whose throne is in the heavens, in common with other

other men. And his eyes behold your conduct in your public capacity, and he sees and observes it, not merely as a spectator, but an almighty righteous judge, one who enters all upon record in order to a reckoning another day. And a day is coming, it lingers not, when you shall all stand upon a level, with the meanest subjects, before the tremendous bar of the righteous judge of all the earth, and be called upon to render an account, not only of your private life, but of your whole management as entrusted with the concerns of this people.

Under the realising apprehension of this, suffer me, in the name of God, ( tho' the most unworthy of his servants ) to advise you to review the public conduct, respecting the *passing bills*, and to do whatever may lay in your power to prevent their being the occasion of that injustice, which, if continued much longer, will destroy the small remains of common honesty that are still left in the land, and make us an abhorrence to the people that delight in righteousness.

Let me beseech you, *Sirs*, for the sake of this poor people, and for the sake of your own souls, when you shall stand before the dreadful bar of the eternal judgment, to lay aside all party designs and private considerations, and to deliberate upon this great affair, with a single view to the public good, and under the uniform influence

ence of a steady principle of righteousness ; for, as the wise man observes, ‘ transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness’, while ‘ the righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, and their integrity shall guide them’ ; and again, ‘ as for the upright, the Lord directeth their way’.

If there needs any excuse for my wonted plainness of speech, I can only say, — my conscience beareth me witness, that what I have said has proceeded, not from want of a decent respect for those who are my *civil Fathers*, but from faithfulness to God, whose I am, and whom I desire to serve, as well as from an ardent love to my dear country, which I am grieved to behold in tears, by reason of ‘ the oppressions that are done under the sun’.

Custom might now demand an address to my fathers and brethen in the *ministry* ; but as a sermon will be preached to the *clergy* to-morrow, by one who is every way my superior, and from whom I expect myself to receive instruction, I shall no otherwise apply to them than as they may be concerned in the *exhortation* to the *people*, which, agreeably to the preceeding discourse, speaketh in the words of the inspired *Solomon*, ‘ Fear God, and honour the king.

Be, first of all, concerned to become truly religious ; men of piety towards God, faith in our

## *An Election-SERMON.*

64

our Lord Jesus Christ, and the subjects of that regenerating change, which shall renew your whole inner man, and form you to a resemblance of the blessed Jesus, in the moral temper of his mind.

And let your religion now discover itself in all proper ways; particularly, in doing your duty to those, whom it hath pleased God to entrust with power to rule over you.

Be exhorted to ‘make supplications, prayers and intercessions, with giving of thanks, for the King in supreme, and for all in authority’ under him, that by means of their wise, and gentle, and just administrations in Government, we may ‘lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty’.

And as subjection to civil rulers is so peremptorily demanded of you, by the laws of our holy religion, that you can't be good christians without it, let me caution you, on the one hand, not to 'despise dominion', nor 'speak evil of dignities': And, on the other, let me 'put you in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates; submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: Whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the

praise of them that do well : For so is the will of God'.

And as rulers are the ministers of God, his authoris'd deputies, for the people's good, and continually, so far as they answer the ends of their institution, attend on this very thing : 'For this cause pay you tribute also' : And do it, not grudgingly, but with a cheerful mind, in obedience to that glorious sovereign Being, who has said, ' render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's'.

In fine, Let me call upon you to 'render unto all their dues'. Abhor the little arts of fraud and deceit that are become so common, in this day of growing dishonesty. Make use of *conscience* in your dealings with your neighbour ; and be fair and equitable, wherein you may have to do with him in a way of commerce. In conformity to the righteous God, love righteousness, and discover that you do so, by constantly living in the practice of it : Always bearing it in mind, that he, 'whose eyes behold, and whose eyelids try the children of men', will hereafter descend from heaven, 'to give to every man according as his work shall be'. Behold ! he cometh with clouds, and we shall, every one of us, see him. We are hastening to another world ; and it will not be long, before we shall all be together again, in a much more numerous assembly

assembly, and upon a far greater occasion, even that of being tried for our future existence, at the dreadful tribunal of the impartial judge of the quick and dead. The good Lord so impress the thought upon the hearts of us all, whether Rulers, or ministers, or people, as that it may have an abiding influence on us, engaging us to be faithful and just in our respective places : And now may we hope, of the mercy of God, thro' the merits of our saviour Jesus Christ, to be acquitted at the bar of judgment, pronounced blessed, and bid to inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the World.

*A M E N.*



*APPENDIX.*

## APPENDIX.

O fill up a vacant page or two, I shall insert a few passages, which were delivered, some years since, in the audience of the great and general Court.

The first is taken from the Rev. Mr. John Barnard's Election-Sermon ; where, speaking of the *medium of our trade*, he says, ( pag. 29, 30. ) " It was the positive law of God, " ( yet in it self a moral precept ; ) ( Lev. xix. 35, 36. ) Ye " shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight ; " in measure: just ballances, just weights, and a just ephah, and " a just hin, shall ye have. And so may context says, the just " weight, and ballance, are the Lord's. They are what God " strictly requires. They are his weight, and measure, and " not to be altered by man, at pleasure. And if the weight, " and measure, by which men deal out to their neighbours, " must be just, certain, and invariable, much more ought " that to be so which is the standard of all others, and the " only sure rule by which to proportion the value of every " thing ; which it cannot be, while it is left to every man's " discretion, justice or probity, to lengthen, or shorten, to " widen, or contract, to add to, or take from, it, as may " best suit with his particular occasions. Till a Government " have made the ballance even, and the weight, meteyard, " ephah, and hin, of such a certain size, that every man may " know what certain rule to go by, in dealing with his " neighbour, it will be left to each person to act as he pleases ; " and when every man is left at such a lawless liberty, it will " not be to be wondered at, if some that can't help it, are " forced to accept of the one half of the weight and measure " that others can demand; or if what was but an ounce a while " ago be grown up to a pound anon, and the nail stretches " it self to a yard ; I mean the variations of all measure will " be without bounds, because the medium that proves them " is it self variable ; and there will as certainly be a pro- " gression in the variation, in the diminishing hand, let the " quantity of the medium be more or less, as that there are " men that buy, and sell, and hope to get gain. What the " consequents of this must be to a people, needs no great " foresight to determine. And where the fault of all the  
" confusion

## APPENDIX.

“ confusion brought upon such a people, will at last be found  
“ to lie ( tho' it might have taken it's rise from humane  
“ frailty, and mistake, but becomes greatly aggravated by  
“ the continuance of the error after the discovery of it,) )  
“ every one may plainly see.”

The other are borrowed from the Rev. Mr. Appleton's Sermon upon the like occasion, in which it is said, ( pag. 37, 38.)  
“ Many of our rulers have from the beginning been men of  
“ justice and wisdom, that have had the knowledge and the  
“ principle ; but there is reason to fear this has not been the  
“ case of all.

“ It is to be feared, that some former assemblies have not  
“ in all respects govern'd themselves by those precepts and  
“ principles ; if they had, I cannot think we should have  
“ been so involved, as now we are. *GOD forbid, that I*  
“ *should be guilty of rash judging.* But who can think, if there  
“ had been nothing of a party-spirit, or of a spirit of pride  
“ and opposition, nothing of a selfish and a contracted spirit,  
“ that the Province would have been so perplexed, as that  
“ now it seems to be beyond any common skill to extricate it.  
“ That *honesty is the best policy* is as true as it is a common  
“ saying, and is abundantly supported by the oracles of truth :  
“ *the righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, but trans-*  
“ *gressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness,* Prov. 11. 6.  
“ The righteous Lord, I fear, has been provoked with the  
“ corruptions that he has seen in our general Courts, and so  
“ has withheld wisdom from the wise, and scattered darkness  
“ in their paths, and left many marks of his displeasure upon  
“ us. The unsteady conduct about our *medium* shews, that  
“ there has wanted not only wisdom, but truth and justice.  
“ For if there had been that uprightness, and such a disinte-  
“ rested regard to the public good as there should have been ; I  
“ can't think that things would have come to this unhappy pass.  
“ The integrity of the upright would have guided them into  
“ better measures, than to send forth a medium with such a  
“ depreciating tendency in it ; that instead of it's being a fixed  
“ steady medium of commutative justice, it has been, for  
“ many years, the grand medium of injustice among us, and  
“ rendred justice between man and man almost impracti-  
“ cable.”



